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Chairman: Mrs. ESPINOSA (Mexico)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 114: PROGRAMME PLANNING (A/51/6 (Programmes 12, 13, 19 and 21), A/51/16 (Part I); A/C.3/51/5)

1. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in response to the letter from the Chairman of the Fifth Committee (A/C.3/51/5) requesting the views of the Third Committee concerning Programmes 12, 13, 19 and 21 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213, said that her statement was the outcome of a consensus and would be supplemented by remarks from delegations which had associated themselves therewith concerning particular aspects of the programmes. Tremendous progress had been made in the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns into the objectives of development and in efforts to take into account considerations other than those which were market-based. That progress was due to the major world conferences organized by the United Nations and to the work of the Third Committee, in particular, as was recently stated by the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. The Third Committee should therefore make its views known on the programme planning of the United Nations.

2. Concerning programme 5 (Policy coordination and sustainable development), which was not included in the programmes mentioned by the Fifth Committee but fell within the mandate of the Third Committee, and more particularly subprogramme 5.2 (Advancement of women), to be implemented by the Division for the Advancement of Women through expanded interaction with civil society, a priority reference should be made in paragraph 5.6 to the primary responsibility of Governments for the implementation at the national level of the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Subprogramme 5.3 (Social development) should also include a reference to the role of the family in activities aimed at assisting disadvantaged social groups. As for the part to be played by the Commission on Sustainable Development in following up the World Summit for Social Development, the Group of 77 attached great importance to increasing its membership and extending the duration of its sessions, as decided by the Economic and Social Council, the aim being to assist the Commission in the fulfilment of its new mandates. It was equally essential that it should have the necessary resources needed for that purpose.

3. With regard to programme 12 (Crime prevention and criminal justice), the Group of 77 and China believed that, in paragraph 12.3 (b), the objective should be not to strengthen the capacity of Governments, but to support the strengthening of the capacity of Governments to reform their legislation and criminal justice systems, since that was a sovereign prerogative of States; moreover, any collaboration with the United Nations should be subject to the consent of States. Similarly, in paragraph 12.3 (c), it would be preferable to replace the phrase "the work of the programme will result in improved legislation and regulatory measures" with the phrase "the work of the programme will enable support to the improvement of legislation and regulatory measures". It was also important to add the trafficking and sale of children and their organs to the forms of transnational crime mentioned in the same paragraph.

4. Programme 13 (International drug control) should mention the role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the meetings of heads of national drug law enforcement agencies (HONLEA). In paragraph 13.2, a reference should also be made to General Assembly resolutions 49/168 and 50/148, which were essential to the mandate of UNDCP. Finally, in referring to the development and maintenance of international norms and standards for drug control, mention should be made in paragraph 13.3 of the principle of universal acceptance.

5. The Group of 77 and China supported the content of programme 21 (Protection and assistance to refugees), as well as its recommended approach to assistance to refugees, and hoped that new and additional resources would be allocated to programmes in the interest of developing countries in the field of economic and social development.

6. Mr. BORDA (Colombia), speaking on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement had actively participated in the deliberations which had culminated in the creation of a subprogramme within the proposed medium-term plan that was dedicated to the right to development. While welcoming the fact that, in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 50/183 and paragraph 38 of General Assembly resolution 50/214, the right to development had been included in the proposed medium-term plan, he regretted that it was not the subject of a separate subprogramme and said that it was necessary to determine in advance the percentage of resources to be allocated in the subprogramme in which it was included to activities aimed at implementing the Declaration on the Right to Development and to investigation and analysis. In addition, in programme 19 (Human rights), paragraph 19.3 (b) was too vague in that it failed to mention specifically the United Nations organs which were competent to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to the promotion and protection of human rights. With regard to the inclusion of a human rights dimension into United Nations peacekeeping operations, referred to in paragraph 19.3 (j), he believed that it was an unacceptable generalization and that a clear differentiation should be made between humanitarian and peacekeeping operations in accordance with the strictest interpretation of the rules of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. Mr. REYES RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) unreservedly supported the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. He stressed the importance of the current debate in the formulation of the medium-term plan and, more particularly, the role of States in following up major international conferences; that should be mentioned in the proposed medium-term plan, in particular in paragraph 5.6 of subprogramme 5.2 (Advancement of women). He also believed that paragraph 12.3 of programme 12 (Crime prevention and criminal justice) should state that it was imperative to obtain the consent of States before providing them with technical assistance or advisory services. While he approved the general content of programmes 12, 13 and 21 and subprogrammes 5.2 and 5.6, he would like to see particular attention devoted to activities aimed at meeting the essential needs of developing countries in fields such as training, technical assistance and education.

8. Concerning programme 19 (Human rights), his delegation supported the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to take account

of the priorities set by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and General Assembly resolutions, particularly those concerning the right to development. That being so, he believed that, in paragraph 19.1, it was important not to mention certain principles of the Vienna Declaration while excluding others. In paragraph 19.3 (j), the inclusion of a human rights dimension into United Nations peacekeeping operations should not be mentioned as one of the objectives of the programme; subprogramme 19.1 contained too many objectives and priorities; that would make it impossible to implement the provisions of the resolution, particularly those which sought to create a new unit with responsibility for the right to development. The solution to the problem might be to establish four subprogrammes, as had been done in the case of programme 35 in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. Drawing attention to the coordinating role played by the Centre for Human Rights in activities carried out within the framework of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, he said he believed that provision for the resources needed to support those activities should be made in subprogramme 1.

9. Turning to subprogramme 19.2, he wondered why supporting human rights bodies and organs and supporting special procedures should be the subject of two separate subprogrammes; in the past, they had been contained within a single subprogramme. With a view to avoiding duplication, as recommended by the Vienna Declaration, he believed that it would be preferable to revert to a single subprogramme. He also emphasized the need to find a balance between activities for the promotion and the protection of human rights and to allocate additional resources to the former, in particular. In general, he considered it essential to increase funding for programme 19, although not to the detriment of other programmes already in place or planned in the field of cooperation for development.

10. Mr. BEN AMOR (Tunisia) said that his delegation subscribed to the view expressed by the Group of 77 and China concerning programme planning. It also welcomed the initiative whereby questions within the mandate of the different Committees of the General Assembly would be considered in advance by the bodies concerned before they were considered by the Fifth Committee. That initiative would promote consultation, dialogue, transparency and, consequently, efficiency, and would also enable the Committees concerned to take part in the decision-making, thereby helping to facilitate the work of the Fifth Committee by providing indications whereby decisions could be motivated by other than purely administrative or budgetary considerations.

11. A substantial number of the issues referred to the Third Committee were political in nature and the decisions adopted thereon could not be guided by budgetary concerns alone. One particular example concerned questions linked to development in the wider sense of the term, which could not be neglected on the pretext of budgetary constraints. Despite the financial difficulties of the United Nations, it was crucial that programmes for development should be maintained and that the Third Committee should have the time needed to consider the topics which fell within its mandate.

12. Mr. WISSA (Egypt) said that his delegation shared the views expressed by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. The discussions in the

Committee for Programme and Coordination had brought out a trend towards diminishing the role of the United Nations in the field of development.

13. The developing countries stressed that the United Nations should continue to accord the highest priority to economic and social development, which formed the basis for the stability, peace and well-being of all societies.

14. Concerning the question of the restructuring of the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, his delegation reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out his task, but regretted that he had not dealt with the key issue of the report, namely, the diverging views concerning the medium-term plan. Before the plan was adopted, States must feel confident that it conformed to the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions, in particular those concerning human rights. The General Assembly must be consulted on the restructuring process before it was implemented, in order to avoid the appearance of any procedural irregularity. His delegation was deeply concerned to note that the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions, which were very explicit, had been twisted, and wished to know whether such procedures, which were highly unusual, were based on precedent. It wondered, in particular, whether the project to restructure the Centre for Human Rights conformed to the provisions of paragraphs 36 to 39 (sect. 21) of resolution 50/214, adopted by the General Assembly on the report of the Fifth Committee.

15. Moreover, in view of the priorities established in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, a distinction should be made between the advisory services mentioned in paragraphs 67 to 70 of section II of the Programme of Action and the special procedures described in its paragraph 95. A single service should be responsible for advisory services and technical assistance in order to avoid any problems having to do with political sensitivity or conditionality regarding technical assistance in the field of human rights. Another question concerned the transparency of the measures taken within the framework of the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights. His delegation was also concerned about the future of the Centre, and, in particular, wished to know if it would maintain its place within the new structure. It hoped to obtain a response to all those questions and, in particular, that they would be dealt with in the message which the Chairman of the Third Committee addressed to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

16. The CHAIRMAN assured delegations that all the views expressed would be transmitted to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee.

17. Mrs. MESDOUA (Algeria) said that her delegation fully agreed with the statements delivered by Costa Rica and Colombia, and attached great importance to the consideration of the question of programming, which offered an opportunity for the Third Committee to contribute to improving the consultative process for the formulation of the medium-term plan, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213. The submission of each of the programmes in the proposed medium-term plan to the Main Committees for their consideration was a step towards improving the effectiveness and coordination of the work of the Organization. Such coordination was necessary in order to avoid a situation

where budgetary or economic considerations impeded the adoption of humanitarian resolutions for economic and social development.

18. The programmes which would comprise the medium-term plan should correspond to the mandates arising from the resolutions adopted. In the absence of such coherence, the Third Committee ran the risk of calling into question the very purpose of its work. Austerity measures which affected the Organization should not take the form of the reduction or elimination of activities or programmes, which would help to perpetuate the extremely disturbing situation of many regions, particularly Africa.

19. The Third Committee should be able to devote the necessary time to giving proper consideration to the proposed programmes and thereby provide its input to the serious preparation of the medium-term plan.

20. Mr. DOYLE (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that, since the consideration of the medium-term plan fell primarily within the province of the Fifth Committee, he would make more detailed comments on the programmes concerning the Third Committee and other programmes when the Fifth Committee took up the question.

21. The purpose of the plan was to ensure that proposed activities of the United Nations system were in accordance with the decisions and priorities already established by the Member States; it should therefore not serve as a pretext to revisit those decisions.

22. The mandate of the United Nations human rights programme derived from Articles 1, 13 and 55 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, resolution 48/141, which defined the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, international human rights instruments and the decisions taken by the General Assembly and other policy-making bodies.

23. As the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action had specified that all human rights were universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and must be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis, the European Union rejected any suggestion that one might establish a hierarchy of human rights or that any single human right could be given overarching importance.

24. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action also called for the strengthening of the human rights machinery of the United Nations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/141, had entrusted the High Commissioner for Human Rights with carrying out that task. To that end, the High Commissioner had undertaken a review of the workings of the Centre for Human Rights by engaging in extensive consultations and hiring a consultancy firm. That had resulted in the decision to restructure the Centre by dividing it into three branches: the first would be responsible for the promotion and protection of the right to development, the second would provide support services and the third would be responsible for programmes and activities. The European Union believed that the restructuring fell entirely within the competence of the High Commissioner and corresponded to the provisions of resolution 50/214.

Programme 19 of the proposed medium-term plan was in full conformity with the revised structure of the Centre. It duly took into account the decisions of the General Assembly and other policy-making bodies and accurately reflected the spirit of the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; it should therefore be adopted unchanged by the General Assembly.

25. Mrs. VARGAS (Nicaragua) welcomed the fact that the Chairman of the Fifth Committee had requested the Third Committee's opinion on programmes contained in the proposed medium-term plan which fell within its competence. The views expressed by the Third Committee in that connection were of great political importance, for they were the views of all States Members of the United Nations and not only of those which belonged to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) - or even the Economic and Social Council. The initiative contributed to the intergovernmental consultative process which should exist in the United Nations between the Main Committees of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions. It was particularly noteworthy that the content and institutional framework of the programmes carried out by the United Nations in the social sector depended directly on the deliberations of the Third Committee and the instruments it adopted. It was to be hoped that the opinion of the Third Committee would also help to curb the ardour of those who, on the pretext of a financial crisis, desired a reduction in the allocation of resources to certain programmes of great importance to the developing countries. She expressed agreement with the statements delivered by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. The initiatives taken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular, the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights, which he had undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, deserved the support of the Third Committee, since their objective was to facilitate the exercise of all human rights without distinction. She hoped that the Fifth Committee would allocate the resources necessary in order for programme 19 to fulfil its objectives. She reaffirmed the importance which her country and the developing countries attached to programme 5 (Policy coordination and sustainable development) which should be strengthened and should receive the necessary resources so that the policies it had elaborated could be implemented in order to follow up the commitments undertaken at the major world conferences. At the end of subparagraph (b) of paragraph 5.4, the words "in particular, in developing countries" should be added. She hoped that the recommendation of CPC to delete the words between parentheses in paragraph 5.9 would be accepted. The words "and strengthened coordination with the Bretton Woods institutions" should be added at the end of subparagraph (d) of paragraph 5.4.

26. As for subprogramme 5.2 (Advancement of women), her delegation considered that strong support should be given to the Division for the Advancement of Women, which had done remarkable work, pursuant to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to ensure that parity issues were taken into account in women's programmes and in the elaboration of general development policies.

27. In conclusion, she asked that the necessary economies which the Organization had to make to recover from the current financial crisis should not be allowed to affect social and economic development programmes or programmes in favour of developing countries, since that would be to renege on the political

commitments entered into over the years in the context of major international conferences.

28. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) welcomed the Fifth Committee's initiative in referring certain programmes in the medium-term plan to the Third Committee for consideration before the Fifth Committee considered them in its turn. His delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. Only those bodies which were specialized in such issues were qualified to provide monitoring and assistance in crime prevention, criminal justice and drug control.

29. Since 1949, the United Nations had helped to relieve the suffering of the Palestinian people, which had been expelled from its own land as a result of Israeli occupation and expansionist policies. The United Nations must continue, through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), to provide assistance to the Palestinian people under programme 22. His Government called upon donor countries to increase their contributions so that the tragedy of the Palestinians could be brought to an end and they could return to their homes. The United Nations must continue its humanitarian aid and intensify early-warning measures to prevent natural and technological disasters and humanitarian emergencies.

30. Programme 19 was intended to promote the universal enjoyment of human rights. As for the right to development, the efforts of the United Nations in that area should be increased. Its activities should not be restricted to research and analysis, all the more so since a basis existed for the effective enjoyment of that right.

31. More emphasis should be placed on the Organization's work in the areas of the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and new forms of discrimination, and the realization of the rights of women and children. That group of issues should be dealt with separately from other matters.

32. Finally, the High Commissioner for Human Rights should discuss the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights within the framework of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly.

33. Mr. TELLES-RIBEIRO (Brazil), recalling that his delegation had made known its position on the medium-term plan a few months previously, expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica. Programme 19 illustrated the key role the High Commissioner was called upon to play in promoting international cooperation in the field of human rights, and reflected the spirit of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which emphasized the interdependent nature of all human rights.

34. Brazil had actively participated in the World Conference on Human Rights and had welcomed the creation of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights. However, despite budgetary constraints and staff reductions, the High Commissioner must be given adequate support in order to deal with the complexity of his task, particularly since his proposals should enable him and the Centre for Human Rights to fulfil the mandate which had been entrusted to them more effectively. His delegation supported the restructuring of the Centre, which

would enhance the Centre's efficiency. Its three new branches would enable it to fulfil its functions more effectively. More detailed consideration should, however, be given to the question which had been raised by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries concerning the allocation of resources within the three branches.

35. He hoped that the High Commissioner would succeed in attracting additional financial support, including support from international financial institutions, for activities aimed at strengthening democracy and ensuring the rule of law. Those goals should also be pursued by the Centre for Human Rights.

36. His delegation wished to reaffirm the importance it attached to its cooperation with the High Commissioner with a view to ensuring the effective enjoyment of their rights by the peoples of the world.

37. His delegation was pleased to note that the Chairman intended to transmit in a letter to the Fifth Committee the various views which had been expressed during the current meeting; the letter should, as far as possible, be made to reflect the position of the members of the Third Committee and should facilitate and guide the work of the Fifth Committee.

38. Mr. GARCÍA MORITÁN (Argentina) said that it was gratifying that the Third Committee had been invited by the Fifth Committee to comment on programme planning in respect of social issues. The strengthening of the machinery for the protection and promotion of human rights was of the highest importance and the budgetary crisis could not be used as a pretext for reducing the resources allocated for that purpose. He reiterated his strong support for human rights bodies and agencies, and reaffirmed that his delegation attached great importance to the mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the fulfilment of which required greater resources than those currently made available. He took the opportunity to congratulate the Office of the High Commissioner on its work regarding the right to development.

39. Mrs. MORGAN (Mexico) said that her delegation attached great importance to the work of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in particular to the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights. It was essential that the Office of the High Commissioner and the Centre should be provided with sufficient resources to fulfil their mandate.

40. Mr. CONCHA (Chile) supported the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. It was gratifying that the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 tended to reorient the activities of the United Nations system, particularly in the social field, and he hoped that it would be adopted by the General Assembly. Also, since human rights were the very foundation of any democratic system, he strongly supported activities for their promotion and protection, and particularly welcomed the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights. He added, in that connection, that programme 19 should be adopted in its current form by the General Assembly, since that would show the importance attached by Member States to the mandate of the High Commissioner.

41. Ms. DURÁN (Venezuela), referring to programme 19 of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001, said that she supported the

restructuring of the human rights programme proposed by the High Commissioner, as it took account of the budgetary crisis in the Organization and of the requests made by the General Assembly. She endorsed the division of programme 19 into three subprogrammes and welcomed the fact that subprogramme 19.1 was devoted to the right to development. That, in her view, would make it possible to avoid duplication and to begin to simplify and rationalize work in the interests of improved coordination. She also considered that it was essential for the Centre for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to work in close cooperation. In any case, the new administrative structure contained provision for the Centre for Human Rights to monitor the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, assist the High Commissioner in his work, and thus provide the necessary support for the implementation of the United Nations human rights programme. Furthermore, in the light of the Organization's current financial situation, she noted with satisfaction that, as the High Commissioner had indicated in his statement to CPC on 20 June 1996, the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights would not require any additional financial resources.

42. Her delegation endorsed the declaration made on behalf of the non-aligned countries at the meeting of the CPC on 20 June 1996 concerning paragraph 19.3, subparagraphs (b) and (j), of programme 19. It should be clearly indicated what agencies would contribute to the preparation of the programme for the promotion and protection of human rights. Similarly, a clear distinction must be drawn between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance. Lastly, the highest priority must be given to the new administrative structure proposed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, since it would enable the Organization to work more effectively in the field of human rights. Her delegation hoped that its comments would be reflected in the document to be submitted to the Fifth Committee.

43. Mrs. MARTÍNEZ (Ecuador) endorsed the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia. Referring to programme 19, she advocated supporting the restructuring undertaken by the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The right to development was now recognized as one of the truly fundamental human rights and the place accorded to it by the High Commissioner was justified, as was amply evidenced by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Declaration on the Right to Development, the commitment made by Heads of State or Government in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, and by a number of resolutions of the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies dealing with human rights. Furthermore, the proposed restructuring took account of the constraints brought about by the Organization's financial crisis, for the High Commissioner had stressed that additional cuts had been made in an already limited human rights budget. Lastly, the 14 objectives listed in paragraph 3 of programme 19 took account of the new structure of the Centre for Human Rights and could thus be regarded as realistic.

44. Mr. BALL (New Zealand), speaking on behalf also of Australia and Canada, said that he supported programme 19. The measures taken by the High Commissioner to increase the effectiveness of the Centre for Human Rights were indispensable and must be continued; consequently, the High Commissioner should have adequate financial and human resources available to him.

45. Mrs. TAVARES de ÁLVAREZ (Dominican Republic) endorsed the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica, welcomed the measures taken by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and pledged her delegation's full support.

46. Mrs. LIMJUCO (Philippines) said that, while her delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica, it noted with regard to programme 12, Crime prevention and criminal justice, that, although the objective of encouraging the transfer of expertise in the effective and humane handling of offenders and victims was one of the objectives defined in subprogramme 12.1, that subprogramme contained no allusion to the victims of crime. Mention should be made of the need for the United Nations, and specifically the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, to undertake measures to help the victims of crime. Recalling the statement she had made on agenda item 101, she reaffirmed the urgent need for training to be provided for persons who received the victims of crime, to enable them to help the latter to overcome their traumas.

47. With regard to programme 13, International drug control, she regretted that no reference was made to the very specific problems of transit countries. Programme 19 seemed to be balanced and comprehensive, in that it encompassed a broad range of rights, in particular the right to development and the rights of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. She had full confidence in the ability of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to implement the programmes entrusted to him, and urged full support for him in the ongoing reorganization of the Centre for Human Rights, as he was in the best position to determine the most effective measures the Organization must take in the field of human rights. Lastly, with regard to programme 5, Policy coordination and sustainable development, and more particularly to the advancement of women and the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, she was strongly of the view that more resources and attention should be given to concerns affecting vulnerable and disadvantaged women and girls.

48. Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) said that her country attached paramount importance to subprogramme 1 of programme 19, which gave concrete form to a fundamental right, the right to development. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that, according to paragraph 2 of programme 19, the High Commissioner proposed to give the United Nations human rights programme objectives which went far beyond the mere protection of human rights, such as to provide leadership on human rights issues and to emphasize the importance of human rights on the international and national agendas; to promote international cooperation for human rights; to stimulate and coordinate action on those issues across the whole United Nations system; and, especially, to emphasize preventive human rights action, promote the establishment of national human rights infrastructures and provide education, information, advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights.

49. Her delegation endorsed all the objectives of the human rights programme listed in paragraph 19.3, but attached particular importance to objectives (i), (j), (k) and (m). It also supported subprogramme 2 (Supporting human rights bodies and organs) and subprogramme 3 (Advisory services, technical cooperation, support to human rights fact-finding procedures and field activities), which it considered indispensable to the effective exercise of human rights.

50. Her delegation paid tribute to the action taken by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who had been able to carry out his mandate despite inadequate financial and human resources and expressed the hope that it would be possible to provide him with the support necessary for the completion of his work.

51. Mr. MOFOKENG (South Africa) endorsed the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia.

52. With regard to programme 19, his delegation noted that the High Commissioner for Human Rights faced very difficult circumstances in the discharge of the mandate conferred on him by the General Assembly. There had been an urgent need to restructure the Centre for Human Rights, and the changes would enable it to respond to contemporary realities. In that regard, his delegation noted that, while many senior officials spoke a good deal about reforming the United Nations, the High Commissioner was one of the few to have taken restructuring measures. The Centre continued to suffer from a lack of financial resources and staff. His delegation urged all Member States to extend their support to the High Commissioner, so that any failure could not subsequently be attributed to a lack of cooperation on their part. It stressed that the debate on the basic elements of the Organization's structure must take place within the framework of the debates on human rights in the Third Committee and the General Assembly.

53. Mr. MUKHOPADHAYA (India) agreed with the statements made by the representative of Costa Rica concerning programmes 5, 12, 13 and 21 and by the representative of Colombia concerning programme 19. He thanked the groups of States and the Chairmen of the Fifth and Third Committees for adding programme 19 to the Third Committee's agenda and expressed satisfaction that the Chairman of the Third Committee intended to share that Committee's observations with the Fifth Committee.

54. His delegation had expressed its viewpoint on various areas related to the planning of human rights programmes during the meetings of CPC held in June, July and September, as well as its concerns about the pre-eminence of the right to development and the superiority of a functional rather than a thematic approach. Those concerns remained, but he felt that the High Commissioner had made very real progress at the programme planning level and beyond to reassure delegations that the right to development and the development dimension were uppermost in his mind; he therefore deserved the support of Member States. He noted that the High Commissioner had also been in contact with the Bretton Woods institutions. His efforts must be reinforced with funds from the regular budget and any other resources which he might request. He must also be allowed to do his work independently without being hindered by micromanagement. Pressures on the United Nations for financial reform should not be used as a pretext for introducing micromanagement.

55. His delegation attached great importance to the programme areas dealing with technical assistance and was convinced that development, education and training would help to improve the human rights situation in general. Stressing the "development" dimension would be the best method of promoting social progress, improving the standard of living and guaranteeing greater freedom. Despite its concerns, his delegation continued to support the High

Commissioner's human rights programme and felt that the resources at his disposal should be reinforced and that he should be given the time necessary to prove himself.

56. Mrs. LEBL (United States of America) said that the medium-term plan was meant to be a tool for programme planning which could then be used to draw up the next budget. The current medium-term plan had not achieved consensus in CPC, but that had not prevented the budget process for the next biennium from being set in motion. The preceding medium-term plan had met a similar fate. Her delegation therefore regretted that the process was not functioning as it should and, in that connection, recalled the comments made by her delegation in CPC during the discussions on the medium-term plan. CPC must fulfil its role of examining programmes and the budget implications of United Nations activities and, through its recommendations, ensure that those activities and the allocation of resources reflected the mandates and priorities defined by the Member States. The report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/51/16 (Part II)) submitted to the Fifth Committee for consideration accurately reflected the substantive views of her delegation. She would not repeat the comments that her delegation had made concerning the programmes recommended for approval (crime prevention, drug control and protection and assistance to refugees), but she regretted that some areas of the programme had remained in parentheses with the result that no agreement on the plan as a whole had been reached.

57. Her delegation fully supported programme 19 of the proposed medium-term plan (A/51/6) and reaffirmed that the activities undertaken by the United Nations in the area of human rights were and would remain a high priority for the United States.

58. Her delegation also supported the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights suggested by the High Commissioner, as it would state in the Fifth Committee when it considered the question, since the restructuring was in accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular resolution 50/214. Her delegation intended to negotiate actively to that end within the Fifth Committee and encouraged other delegations to do the same. On the practical level, her delegation suggested that, concurrently with the views that would be submitted through the Third Committee, delegations should consult with the colleagues from their Missions who covered the Fifth Committee and transmit their views through them.

59. Mrs. SUGIMORI (Japan) recalled the comments made by her delegation during the May and August meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination.

60. With regard to programme 12, her delegation was pleased that due attention had been given to firearm regulation measures in accordance with the programme objectives listed in the Secretary-General's proposal.

61. With regard to programme 13, her delegation attached the greatest importance to the objectives set forth in paragraphs 13.6 (d), 13.7 (b) and (c) and 13.8 (a), (b) and (c), for reasons which had already been explained in CPC. It hoped, in particular, that the International Narcotics Control Board would be

provided with the resources it needed to fulfil its responsibilities under the international drug control conventions.

62. Her delegation also took it that crime prevention and the international drug control programme would continue to be priorities of the United Nations in the medium-term plan for the period 1998 to 2001, as they had been in the previous medium-term plan.

63. Her delegation regretted that CPC had failed to reach a consensus on programme 19, but underlined its support for the subprogrammes contained in the proposed medium-term plan. Although some delegations had expressed concerns - some of which might be legitimate - about the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights, her delegation supported the current efforts by the High Commissioner to restructure the Centre in the hope that that would improve its management and efficiency of its work.

64. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) supported the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia and noted that agenda item 114 was of the greatest importance for the future of the Organization. Referring to programme 19, he said that the implementation of the programme depended on the cooperation of Member States, and that any action in the human rights area must be truly ethical and based above all on the utmost objectivity and rigour; that would avoid any distortion of reality. In the coming years, the Organization would have to promote human rights in the world with the political and financial support of governments and civil society and, in accordance with the principles of the Charter, it would most certainly have to take into account the opinion of the population of its Member States.

65. Programme 19 contained innovative proposals which tended to reinforce the Organization's work in the human rights area and it had the merit of systematically promoting the teaching and dissemination of information on human rights. The objective of adopting, within the United Nations, methods which would allow for more efficient treatment of serious human rights violations and put an end to such violations was also innovative. The implementation of programme 19 would require the strengthening and streamlining of the existing United Nations structures.

66. Mrs. SMOLCIC (Uruguay) said that her delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Costa Rica. It supported the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to improve the efficiency of the Centre for Human Rights and felt that programme 19 should be approved as written. It hoped that the comments that the Third Committee would transmit to the Fifth Committee would accurately reflect the opinions expressed during the debate.

67. Mr. XIE Bohua (China) said that his delegation associated itself with the statements made by the representatives of Costa Rica and Colombia.

68. He recalled that, during the meeting of CPC in June 1996, several delegations had expressed their opinions on programme 19, and their comments had been included in the report of CPC. The Fifth Committee must take all those opinions into account when considering the question. He believed that the General Assembly's task during its fifty-first session would be to eliminate the

differences of opinion concerning programme 19 in order to arrive at a better formulation of the programme.

69. China did not think that the priority programmes listed in paragraph 19.2 adequately reflected the human rights situation in the world today, because certain rights merited special attention. In particular, his delegation believed that the programme did not give sufficient attention to the right to development, a right that was of concern to numerous delegations. It reflected neither the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration nor the opinions expressed in the General Assembly over the years. The right to development should be addressed more specifically and it should be given institutional guarantees.

70. With regard to paragraph 19.3, he noted that the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination had been prepared but had not been fully implemented, owing to financial constraints. Implementation of effective measures to combat racism was mentioned in the subprogramme, but there were no details on what precisely was being done. Regarding rationalization and reduction of the number of reports on human rights, his delegation believed that if the proliferation of reports was avoided and they were better focused, the work of signatory States would be lessened, documentation would be streamlined and overall efficiency would be increased.

71. His delegation had expressed its concerns with regard to the restructuring of the Centre for Human Rights during the June session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). It reiterated that restructuring should be carried out in accordance with the rules of procedure, in full consultation with Member States, and with complete transparency. His delegation had serious concerns about the six-month trial period, which had started in September 1996. It considered that the General Assembly should give its endorsement after an in-depth analysis of the matter, which raised complex issues (implementation of General Assembly resolution 48/141, budgetary difficulties, and the problem of redeployment of the Centre's posts). His delegation would have further comments to make on the matter when it was examined by the Fifth Committee.

72. Mr. BORDA (Colombia) said that his delegation supported the statement made by Costa Rica. It was closely following the High Commissioner's actions. It applauded his efforts to adapt his mandate and his concern to give each basic right, especially the right to development, adequate attention.

73. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Bolivia) said that his delegation supported the statements made by Costa Rica and Colombia. With regard to programme 19, it was essential to achieve a balance between the financial and other aspects of the planned human rights activities. His delegation supported the High Commissioner's actions and believed that the restructuring of the United Nations human rights programme that he proposed did take into account the right to development and the commitments made by the international community in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

74. Mr. AGGREY (Ghana) said that he supported the statements made by Costa Rica and Colombia.

75. Programme planning should follow the instructions of the Third Committee, and any decision taken by another organ aimed at postponing, reducing or eliminating programmes was detrimental to the work of the Third Committee.

76. With regard to programme 19, his delegation reiterated its support for the principles set forth in the Vienna Declaration, which stated that human rights were indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and should all be treated on an equal footing, objectively and non-selectively. His delegation also supported the efforts made by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that due attention was paid to all human rights within the United Nations system. As some delegations had expressed concern that priority was being given to certain human rights at the expense of others, he applauded the attention given to economic and social rights and, above all, to the right to development, in subprogramme 19.1. Nevertheless, his delegation believed that such rights should have been dealt with separately.

77. He was surprised that the issue of the advancement of women and the application of the Beijing Platform for Action by the United Nations system had not been included in the proposed medium-term plan, although it had been agreed, during the CPC discussions on the question, to include the issue of women in all the programmes. He recalled that, in 1995, the Secretariat had not included appropriations for that item in the programme budget for 1996-1997, which had made it difficult to hold meetings to draw up an optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. His delegation therefore hoped that the matter would be duly included in the medium-term plan for 1998. It regretted that financial difficulties had not permitted the approved recruitment of personnel for the Division for the Advancement of Women, thus preventing the Division from implementing the programmes mandated in the Beijing Platform for Action. His delegation wished to ensure that the situation would not recur.

78. Mr. REZVANI (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that he supported the statements made by Costa Rica and Colombia, and was delighted that the issue of programme planning had been included on the Third Committee's agenda for the session.

79. With regard to programme 19, he said that his delegation had already presented its point of view, shared by many delegations, to CPC, at its meeting on 21 June 1996. He wished to add that it had found several contradictions with the principles of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, in particular in paragraphs 19.1, 19.3 (a), 19.3 (h), 19.3 (j), 19.4 and 19.9. His delegation hoped that the letter sent to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee would take such concerns into consideration.

80. His delegation applauded the initiative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to restructure the Centre for Human Rights. It believed that the High Commissioner should be given full latitude and enough time to put his plan into practice, impartially and free from pressure, before it was judged.

81. His delegation considered that the major concerns of the developing countries with regard to the right to development should be dealt with on an

equal footing with the other rights, because all human rights were interdependent, indivisible and interrelated.

82. Mrs. PARK (Republic of Korea) reiterated that her delegation fully supported programme 19 (Human rights), which was consistent with the principles set forth in the Vienna Declaration. She believed that the role of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be further strengthened, and supported his efforts to restructure the Centre for Human Rights. She hoped that the Fifth Committee would reach a consensus on the programme and that the General Assembly would adopt it without changes.

83. Mr. DONOKUSUMO (Indonesia) said that he supported the statements made by Costa Rica and Colombia.

84. With regard to programme 19, he supported the efforts of the High Commissioner to restructure the Centre for Human Rights and, fully aware of the Organization's financial constraints, hoped that sufficient funds would be made available to the Centre to allow it to carry out its activities. His delegation had clearly expressed its views on the matter during the June session of CPC. Nevertheless, it reiterated its conviction that the Secretariat should take into account the opinions and interests expressed by the developing countries during the CPC session, in particular with regard to the right to development.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.